

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Lent**  
**Intergenerational Lesson Plan**

**Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11**

**Background**

Jesus understood that he had to face the temptations that come with ministry. He realized he needed to get as vulnerable as possible to assure himself that he could stay grounded. So he fasted to get focus. Vulnerability is the door to both growth and to temptation. Jesus stares down the three temptation biggies: success, prestige, and power. (*Concept found in: Radical Grace, Richard Rohr, St. Anthony Messenger Press. 1993. Pages 294-297*)

**Theme: Turning to God and One Another**

**Before:** Choose which activities you will do and gather the supplies for those activities. The Gathering Time calls for stones. It may be possible to find small stones near your church; it might be fun to invite a few children to help you gather them.

**Gathering**

As people arrive, make sure they all have nametags and then invite people to select a stone to hold. Ask them to find one other person and “introduce” the stones to each other by describing what each of you sees about your stone (its color, smoothness or roughness, how it feels in your hand, etc.) When they have finished describing their stones, ask them to place them in the container you have provided. (*Stone ideas originated from The Rev. Caroline Fairless, Director of Children at Worship: Congregations in Bloom*)

**Supplies Needed:**

Small stones (stones you gather, or river rocks you purchase) so each person can select one. A basket or box that will hold the stones. Name tags and markers.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, that Jesus shows us the way to live our lives. Be with us as we journey through Lent, that we may come to know your more. Amen.

**Preview:** Tell the group what you have planned for this session: beginning and ending in prayer, hearing and reflecting on today’s Gospel passage with a few questions and selected activities. Let them know what time you expect to be finished and answer any questions.

**The Story: Matthew 4:1-11**

Options: identify one person to read the entire passage, ask for volunteers to read parts (the narrator, the devil, and Jesus), or tell it like this:

**Supplies needed:**

Bibles or three copies of this passage.

Jesus knew he had to get off by himself to think about what God was asking him to do. He decided to go without food, spending his time thinking. And at least three very bad ideas came to him.

Jesus could take all the stones he found and turn them into bread. Lots of people would have good food. Bread is good. But making God first in our lives is better.

What about doing something really flashy, getting people's attention so he could tell them the important things God wants them to hear? No. It's not about risky stuff, it is about doing what God wants us to do.

What if Jesus decided to do popular things so everyone would pay attention? Nope. I just need to tell people the truth that God loves them and wants them to love God.

Now Jesus was ready to do his work.

**Questions:**

- Tell the group we are going to think about things we believe Jesus wants us to do. Ask them: Instead of showing off, what things do we do to learn, grow, stay healthy, etc.?
- Instead of doing risky stuff, what are some challenges? (learning how to do cursive writing, learning a new sport, learning new skills for our job, etc.)
- Instead of being bossy, what are some ways we learn how to be the person God dreamed us to be? (Watch people we can trust, check in with God in prayer, etc.)

**Supplies needed:**

(Optional) A large piece of paper posted where all can see. Felt

**Stones: Part One**

Invite the group to each select a stone. Ask them to imagine that the things that are messing us up are stuck to the stones they are holding. Maybe it is that we whine too much. Maybe we are sloppy with our homework.

Maybe we are still mad at someone we need to forgive.

Ask them to imagine that "stuff" making their stones yucky. We can (to ourselves, not out loud) tell God we are sorry that stuff is stuck to our stones. Then we can each of us gently place our stones in the water, so they can be cleaned. Ask the group to sit silently for a minute, thanking God for showing us how to get rid of stuff that is getting in our way.

**Supplies Needed:**

The stones from before. A water-tight container filled with sufficient water to cover all the stones.

**Stones: Part Two**

As a continuation of the above, you can invite the people to take another stone and dry it off. It can be the one they had before, or a different one all together. Have them thoroughly dry the stone and set it aside.

**Supplies Needed:**

The stones from before. Paper towels, sharpie (or permanent) markers or paints.

Gather them into small groups and have them talk about all the things that God has blessed them with or all the things they are thankful for today. Once they have had some time to talk about these things, invite them to either write, draw, or paint on their stones things they are thankful for or what they see their blessings are today.

### Things to Take On

Tell the group that in Lent, in addition to getting rid of stuff that is holding us back, Lent is also a time we can choose to do something new. One new thing could be choosing to help an agency that needs our help.

Describe the agencies you have researched, being open to other suggestions from the group. Ask the group to decide how we could help the organization we choose. It might be bringing non-perishable food to church for an organization we have selected. It could mean saving coins in a container and pooling our resources at the end of Lent. The group can decide.

#### Supplies needed:

Have a brief description of an agency or two in your community that could use your help or provide print-outs of web sites of agencies that work around the world, such as [Episcopal Relief and Development](#) or [Haiti: More than a Cathedral](#) or [The United Thank Offering](#)

### Gifts That Cost Nothing

Ask the group to brainstorm with you things we can do that cost no money. (Examples: ask the child at school who does not seem to have any friends to play on your team; find a few minutes to talk with that lonely person at work who is always interrupting your work; read a really good book, etc.)

#### Supplies Needed:

(Optional) A large piece of paper and markers to record ideas

### Prayer Sticks

During Lent, we focus on doing things that bring us closer to God and help us live more intentionally. It is easy to forget to pray or to always pray for the same things and it is difficult to ask for prayers from others.

- Invite people to create prayer sticks. Pass out popsicle sticks, markers, and pens. Invite them to write prayers or thanksgivings for themselves or others on their popsicle sticks.
- When everyone seems done, invite them to put all their sticks in a big bowl in the center of the room. Mix them up and then invite them to come forward and choose the same number of sticks that they put in (if they put in five prayers, they pull out five prayers) and these are there to take home and use in prayer during Lent.
- You may want to have blank sticks for people to take home and add to their prayer stick pile.
- If you have time, you can also have them decorate small cups to put the sticks in so that they can sit on their table at home.

#### Supplies Needed:

5-10 Popsicle sticks per person (the wide ones work better, but any will do), permanent thin markers, pens, large bowl, and white paper cups (if you think you will have time to decorate them)

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you love us and are here with us to help us when we are tempted to do something bad. Guide us this season of Lent as we pray and practice and return to you. Amen.

*Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.*

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